

When Newark Was Younger

Vacation Spots

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THE fact that New Jersey is famous as a vacation state is well known to all of us. But it may be a surprise to many Newarkers to learn that 100 years ago the City Directory was listing connections on the Morris and Essex Railroad for one of the nation's leading Summer resorts. This was the mineral spring on Schooley's Mountain.

The fame of this chalybeate spring goes back even 50 years earlier, for the edition of Morse's American Geography published in 1794 stated, "In the upper part of Morris County is a cold mineral spring, which is frequented by valetudinarians and its waters have been used with very considerable success."

Speaking, with characteristic caution, of New Jersey's mineral springs to which "invalids resort from every quarter," Jedediah Morse, the first American geographer, remarks, "Perhaps the exercise necessary to get to them and the purity of the air in this lofty situation, aided by a lively imagination, have as great efficacy in curing the patient as the waters."

By 1857, when Appleton's "Illustrated Handbook of American Travel" was published, with detailed plans for railroad trips ranging from a day to all Summer, there were two ways of reaching the 1,100-foot mountain, the New Jersey Central to High Bridge, or the Morris and Essex Railroad to Hacketts-

town, with stages to carry the traveler direct to the leading hotels at the springs. At the same time, hotels and boarding houses at Budd's Lake, only seven miles from Schooley's Mountain Spring, were also favored by families whose men-folk enjoyed fishing.

THE construction of the turnpike between Morristown and Easton, completed about

1816, was responsible for the opening of the springs on Schooley's Mountain to travelers. Older Newarkers remember the Heath House, the first successful hotel, built about 1815, and enlarged repeatedly, until it could accommodate 300 guests. Belmont Hall, of equal importance, was built in 1820, and the registers of both hotels were filled with the names of prominent Jersey-men who returned Summer after Summer for 20 or 30 years. Among them were the Frelinghuysens and Governor Pennington of Newark. Garret Wall of Burlington, Peter Vroom of Somerville, Philemon Dickerson of Paterson, William L. Dayton of Trenton, and Samuel L. Southard of Jersey City.

Hunters and fishermen and their families Summered, as early as 1857, at Greenwood Lake Village, reached by a tri-weekly stage from Sloatsburg on the Erie, just over the New York State border. Henry William Herbert, who, as Frank Forester, was America's first sports writer, and a resident of Newark, loved to visit the Greenwood Lake region, which he described in his "Warwick Woodlands." Stephen Crane, another famous Newark writer, spent considerable time there. The building of the Greenwood Lake Railway to its terminus at Greenwood Lake Station made it easier for Newarkers to visit this lovely wilderness, and the Seven Springs Mountain House was a favorite resort in the 1870s.

Much nearer at hand, and therefore much more frequented, was the Chalybeate Spring at Orange. This was opened in the Summer of 1820 on the Joseph Condit farm, within 100 yards of St. Mark's Episcopal Church. People visited the Orange Mountains for their health way back in June, 1798, when Matthew Condit and Joseph Cone advertised for sale in Wood's Newark Gazette building lots in "Orange Dale" (now South Orange) which "would be convenient for any persons who may wish to take in boarders."

When the spring was opened on the Condit farm crowds of people walked up Northfield road and through the lane to fill jugs and pitchers with the health-giving water and carry it to invalids at home.

A STAGE COACH was advertised to run each morning to the spring from Cortland street in New York; stopping in Newark at Gifford's Tavern at the Four Corners. Taking on a few more passengers and bumping and jolting over the Orange Turnpike, it returned from the springs at 4 in the afternoon.

In 1821 the Orange Spring Company was organized, building the Orange Springs Hotel, run by Ira Muan. Around the spring the company developed groves and streams, cascades and ponds for swans, rustic fences and foot bridges, and a rock staircase. It was for a brief period the most fashionable resort (Continued on Following Page)



Long Branch, Newport of the 1870s, had many features to offer the smart set. In addition to the 400-room Howland House (a bathroom on each of its three floors) there was the Houghton Nursery "Exotic Gardens" to attract visitors.



Brown's Hotel (above) at Newfoundland, Morris County, was favorite Summer resort for North Jersey folk in 1870s. Another was Belmont Hall (below) on Schooley's Mountain, famous for its mineral springs "frequented by valetudinarians."



Younger Newark

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In the nation, where those who could afford vacations spent the time in dancing, driving, picnicking, and, much to the distress of the good church people of the neighborhood, frequenting the several taverns that sprang up in the neighborhood. During the cholera epidemic in New York the Orange Spring Hotel was overwhelmed with reservations, but later the flow of iron water diminished, the leisure class were attracted to Saratoga Springs, and by the later 1830s the popularity of the hotel had waned.

The fine, clear air of the Orange mountains, their cool breezes and excellent water, caused many seekers for health and rest to continue to visit the Oranges. In the 1840s a fad developed that made West Orange a famous health resort. This was the now-forgotten water cure, a craze that had the whole country in its grips. Nowadays we would attribute the remarkable cures claimed by the "water cure" to the plain diet, rest, and cleanliness that accompanied it. But its devotees thought the benefits they derived were gained from the prolonged soaking of their bodies in running streams, to copious drinking of pure water, and to wrapping themselves tightly in sheets dipped in water or to dashing cold water violently upon their persons.

NOT everybody in New Jersey in search of a health-giving change went to the mountains. The New Jersey Eagle advertised a hotel in Perth Amboy, the Mansion House, on June 7, 1822. Its attractions were sea bathing, fine fishing and fowling within 20 minutes walk and fresh oysters hourly!

In The Newark Daily Advertiser in 1847 an advertisement ran for weeks for Bon Sejour, a vacation hotel on Bergen Point (now Bayonne). This hotel was the first home of the Dupont family when they came to this country from France.

Long Branch claims to be



Ocean Grove, founded as Methodist camp meeting ground around 1860 has always been a dignified place and apparel of bathers was on conservative side. This scene of activity on beach fringing the East Bath House was typical of sea.

the oldest seashore resort along the Jersey coast, in fact in the nation. In 1790 or thereabouts the first Summer boarders arrived from Philadelphia; hotels and bath

the country, full of wealth and ostentation. "Diamond Jim" Brady, Jim Fisk and many of New York's smartest and fastest-living people frequented the Moosmouth race

Central developed an all-rail route from Jersey City to Long Branch, people of more modest means and flocks of excursionists began to visit the resort.

By that time a score of seashore resorts, Asbury Park, Ocean Grove, Atlantic City, Spring Lake and Red Bank among them, had grown up to attract people from North Jersey. The time when folk from North Jersey took shore vacations only when advised to do so by their physicians had become ancient history.

Seashore and Mountain Resorts Made Garden State Favorite of the Nation

houses were built in the 1790s and a regular line of stages from Philadelphia established. Later one could reach Long Branch by the Sandy Hook steamer from New York, but Philadelphians still outnumbered folk from North Jersey and New York. It was a long hot drive from Long Branch to the Hook in odd beach-wagons with wheels eight inches wide. In the earliest days Long Branch was a sedate place. People came for the express purpose of improving their health; there were separate bathing hours for men and for women, a white flag being run up for women bathers, a red for men.

As time went on Long Branch became one of the most fashionable resorts in

track which opened in 1870. Presidents Grant, Hayes, Arthur, Garfield and Wilson all visited Long Branch, and President Garfield died there. When in 1875 the New Jersey



Drawing by Jules Tavernier titled "Eagle Rock, Orange," from 1872 book "Picturesque America."



Hikers of '70s sketched by Granville Perkins at the Delaware Water Gap, looking south from Shawnee.